## Atlantic Bay Scallop

### (*Aequipecten irradians concentricus*)



The inside of a scallop, top shell removed. Digestive gland, Abductor Muscle (what we eat), Gills, Sensory blue eyes

### Introduction

Scallop shells are very common on Carolina beaches. When they are alive scallops are known as a mollusk that swims! By opening and suddenly snapping shut the valves, a strong jet of water propels the scallop backward. This enables the scallop to escape predatory starfish and fish.

### What do they look like?

They have an oval shape typical of many seashells. They do have a distinct ribbed form that makes them easily identified. The mollusk inside the shell is similar to a clam.

### How big are they?

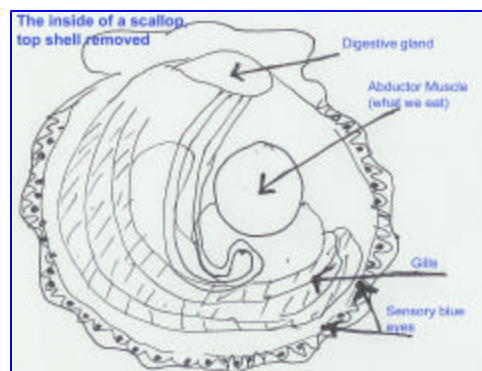They can grow to 3 inches (8cm).

### Where do they live?

Scallops are commonly found in eel grass or turtle grass beds located in North Carolina estuaries and just off of the barrier islands.

### Who eats them?

Starfish and seastars will prey on scallops. They have the ability to pry the shell open and ingest the scallop inside. Other mollusks and crabs are also predators.

### What do they eat?

They filter plankton from the water in which they live.

### How do they mate?

Scallops reproduce sexually. They release eggs and sperm into the water at the same time.

### What are the young like?

As with other mollusks, their larvae are called veligers and they will be part of the zooplankton until they settle down and become adult scallops.

### How long do they live?

They can live 5-6 years

### People Interactions

Scallops are highly prized by man as food. The white meat, which is only the abductor muscle, is rich and has a sweet flavor. The rest of the scallop is not eaten. They are dredged and shucked for market. See the North Carolina Marine Fisheries regulations for harvesting.